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ELDRITCH PRIEST 2023-12-27

EARWORM AND EVENT

NONMUSIC ATTENTION, CYBERNETICS, EARWORM, MUZAK

Our society is therefore not a digestive system—a contemplation complex—but "a channel through which sensations flow, in order to be eliminated without being digested" (110). Entertainment's diversion is the systematic bracketing of the hesitation that consciousness is, and this bracketing is how "sensation passes without obstacles" (110). Sensation of this sort, the free-flowing sort, is essentially pure "information"—or, more accurately, it is a *sheer fluctuation* in the force of existing that refuses to take expression in anything more elaborate than the experience of its own occurring. For this reason, Flusser contends that ours "is a society of [sensation] channels that are more prim- itive than worms: in worms there are digestive functions" (110). Where there is simply input and output— sensation as information—there is only swallowing and shitting: no memory, no digestion, no gathering up of awareness

in a difference that makes a difference. A worm, because it has no apparatus for diversion, loses the purity of sensation to the bureaucracy of its living organism. For a worm, sensation enters into an advancing matrix of vital activity and tendencies, where it feeds into already-established circuits with more or less ap- parent functionality.18 In other words, sheer fluctuation for a worm be- comes tributary to a new phase in the evolving activity of its vermicular ecology. Our diversions, which have no bureaucracy apart from their vying for increasingly refined forms of immediacy, render sensation nothing but a direct, concrete, and fleeting fluctuation of being that supports nothing but the next immediacy. However, the retentionessness of "pure" sensation, the perpetual immediacy of sheer fluctution, is not an organic phenomenon. Pure sensation is a technological achievement effected by the way the entertainment apparatus continually focuses our energies and attention toward a fractalized specious present, a now that is really a next that signifies "a now" over and over again. Or in more familiar (and more lurid) Freudian terms: forgetting sensation is the entertainment apparatus's program to direct libidinal forces toward the mouth and anus, a program that makes pure sensation "a counter-revolution of the *ANAL and oral libido* against the genital one" (Flusser 2013, 110). Coded in this way, where "only the oral and anal apparatus function," sensations become reusable. This means that we distract ourselves, via the apparatus of entertainment, from the unhappiness of consciousness by recycling sensations that "have already been eliminated" (110). We are in effect used by our own apparatus for feedback: "*We are channels for eternal repetition*" (111).

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